

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
1994 Public Act 451, Section 52506 Report
Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-11**

The Department of Natural Resources (Department) is required to provide a report to the Natural Resources Commission and the Legislature that details the following:

(a) The number of harvestable acres in the state forest as determined by the certification program under section 52506.

Forest Certification systems do not determine the number of harvestable acres. Systems evaluate whether harvesting is being conducted in accordance with sustainable forestry principles that consider a broad range of environmental, social, and economic criteria. The 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan (April 10, 2008) addresses the planning requirements of Part 525 and forest certification systems, and allows for a minimum of 53,000 acres prepared for harvest each year.

(b) The number of acres of the state forest that were harvested and the number of cords of wood that were harvested from the state forest.

There were 53,529 acres of state forest harvested in FY 2010-11, producing an estimated volume of 828,117 cords.

(c) The number of acres of state-owned lands owned or controlled by the Department, other than state forest lands that were harvested, and the number of cords of wood that were harvested from those lands.

On non-state forest lands owned or controlled by the Department, a total of 250 acres of timber were harvested in FY 2010-11, with a volume of 6,351 cords.

(d) Efforts by the Department to promote recreational opportunities in the state forest.

The state forest recreation and trails programs are promoted at outdoor shows; recreation conferences, such as the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association conference; Michigan Snowmobile Association meetings; and through various Department publications and the Department website.

Maps of the ORV and snowmobile trail systems are on the Department website in a format that permits public printing and use of the maps, as well as free download to hand-held global positioning units (GPS). Equestrian riding and camping opportunities on state-owned lands are highlighted on an expanded Department web page.

Press releases on camping and trail activities and recreation improvement projects at state forest campgrounds, boating access sites, and trail bridges are issued regularly throughout the year, as are seasonal-themed news articles for state forest camping and trail recreation opportunities.

This year, the Department entered the application world with the launch of the MI Camping and Recreation Locator application. Available at no cost at BlackBerry App World, Android Market, and the Apple Store, the application offers users an easy way to locate information about favorite Michigan state parks, forest campgrounds, boat launches, and outdoor activities. Features include:

- Camping, lodging, and boating information
- Maps showing the location of each state park, forest campground, and boat launch
- Distance between you and each recreational opportunity
- Click-to-call phone numbers to easily contact the recreational facilities
- Boat launch information, such as name and size of the lake, river or pond, details about the ramp, and number of parking spaces
- State park and forest information, such as size of the park, special rules, description of the park, and activities you can find there
- Information about outdoor recreational opportunities, such as swimming, hiking, and horseback riding

Development plans are being finalized for the Owosso to Ionia rail-trail located in Shiawassee, Clinton, and Ionia counties. A trail grant was secured to complete the engineering. A bid process was completed, and a consultant was selected to prepare bid documents. Public grants and local community funds are being secured to complete the construction of this 42-mile corridor, which is planned for 2012-13.

The Department continues to collaborate with outside agencies and organizations to promote, acquire, and develop trails, including work with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, the USDA National Forest, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Nearly 80 miles of rail-trail surface improvements were completed on the North Eastern State Trail from Alpena to Cheboygan and the Fred Meijer Berry Junction Trail from Whitehall south toward Muskegon. A very important mile of rail-trail was acquired in the City of Grand Rapids along the east edge of the Grand River. This mile connects the second largest city in Michigan to a network of over 200 miles of state rail-trail.

The Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC), created by the Governor to advise the Department on the creation, development, operation, and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails in the state, met three times in 2011. The three advisory workgroups (snowmobile, ORV, and non-motorized) met regularly to assist in this process. The Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS), established by the Director of the Department, met frequently and produced the *Draft 2011 Recommendations Report of the ETS for the MSTAC*.

(e) Information on the public's utilization of the recreational opportunities offered by the state forest.

State forest camping use was down slightly in FY 2011 based on \$1.13 million in fee revenues collected compared to \$1.25 million collected in FY 2010. Increased revenues were realized among cabins and semi-modern campgrounds, but were not sufficient to overcome declines within equestrian, group, ORV, and regular campgrounds.

There were 188,665 ORV trail licenses sold during FY 2011, a decrease of 11,128 licenses compared to FY 2010.

There were 164,003 snowmobile trail permits sold during the 2010-11 season (September 1, 2010 through July 31, 2011), a decline of 12,717 trail permits from the 2010 season. There are 354,985 Michigan snowmobile registrations as of November 1, 2011.

Over 90 use permits were issued for a variety of recreational special events, such as dog sled, ski, mountain bike and snowshoe races; dog trials; skeet shooting; and equestrian trail rides on state forest lands.

(f) Efforts by the Department to promote wildlife habitat in the state forest.

Wildlife Division works jointly with Forest Management Division in the compartment review process to ensure wildlife habitat management goals are reflected in the stand level treatments that are approved. In FY 2010-11, Wildlife Division participated in reviewing about 410,000 acres of state forest to determine wildlife management needs. Beyond vegetative management reviews, this acreage includes consideration for habitat improvement and habitat planning on sites with exemplary natural features, endangered/threatened species, or natural areas contained within state forests.

Drafts of Regional State Forest Management Plans (RSFMPs) for the northern Lower Peninsula and eastern and western Upper Peninsulas were nearly completed in 2011. These plans will provide direction to multi-divisional field staff for management of state forest lands. Efforts directed toward ensuring biodiversity, conservation, and wildlife habitat restoration, along with associated recreational hunting and trapping, will be reflected in these plans.

(g) Status of the plan and whether the Department recommends any changes in the plan.

Staff continue to work on the draft RSFMPs, which will enable operational implementation of the strategic 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan (SFMP). There are no recommended changes to the SFMP until RSFMPs are completed.

(h) Status of certification efforts required in section 52505 and, beginning in 2006, a definitive statement of whether the Department is maintaining certification of the entire state forest.

The state forest system was originally awarded forest certification in December 2005 under the auspices of Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). A recertification field audit was conducted by NSF-International Strategic Registrations (in partnership with Scientific Certification Systems) on October 18-22, 2010, and the state forest system was re-certified under both the SFI and FSC standards in December 2010.

(i) A description of any activities that have been undertaken on forest pilot project areas described in section 52511.

Four forest pilot project areas were established in 2006, as required by section 52511. The Department established a team which developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the necessary contracts, implementing bids, providing guidance, and conducting the project evaluation. The RFP was released in March 2011. Bids were received and contracts awarded in the fall of 2011. Work will proceed over the next 5 years, ending in 2015.

In 2011, bids were received for the following four pilot areas:

- **Shingleton Management Unit: Compartment 167** Pilot Stands 3, 5, 7, 22; Alger County, T48N, R16W, Section 31, N1/2 of NW1/4, SW1/4 of NW1/4, Schoolcraft County, T47N R16W, Section 6, W1/2 and Section 7, N1/2 of NW1/4; (approximately 239 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services in the amount of \$30,114.00**
- **Shingleton Management Unit: Compartment 73** Pilot Stands 20, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 48; T42N, R15W, Section 3, E1/2 W1/2, E1/2 and Section 10, NW1/4, NW1/4NE1/4; (approximately 316 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services in the amount of \$91,008.00**
- **Grayling Management Unit: Compartment 190** Pilot Stands 20, 22 and 27; T25N, R04W, Section 16, NE 1/4, W1/2SE1/4, NW1/4 SE1/4, E1/2 SW1/4; (136 acres to treat) – **No bids received**
- **Gaylord Management Unit: Compartment 145** Pilot Stands 32, 41 and 43, T33N, R03W, Section 6, entire except the SE1/4 of SE1/4; 640 acres (272 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Metcalfe Forestry in the amount of \$40,813.60**

Contractors are now working with staff in the Department's Forest Management Division to implement the prescribed treatments as specified in their individual contracts.